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Amendment

apparatus. The narrower limitation has been deleted, thus correcting the indefiniteness rejection. Claim 3 was also amended to correct a typographical error in which it claimed dependence from claim 1 rather than claim 2.

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Hashimoto (USPN 5, 333,413). Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly claim the invention and to specifically claim the limitation in the invention that the arm member has a predetermined fixed length between the vertical axes, one vertical axis being the rotation axis for the runner head and the other the rotation axis for the arm. Therefore, it is not necessary to search the exact position of the runner disk on the lower polishing plate by sensors of the suction head. The position is known through the exact control of the movement of the runner disk. Therefore, it is only necessary to swing the loader arm about a predetermined angle to have a precise alignment of the head and the runner disk. Then, it is only necessary to rotate the suction head to bring the suction ports in alignment with the individual wafers in the runner disk. As to this, only one mark on the disk is necessary. It should be noted that this mark is associated with one opening of the runner disk wherein the wafers are placed. This is very decisive in a method for polishing wafers. For this process, the same sequence after the wafers are processed must be maintained during the complete process, i.e. the first wafer to be processed must be the first wafer to be loaded into a cassette after processing. As described in the specification, the first wafer can be placed in the opening adjacent to the mark. Then the next wafers are placed in the following openings, e.g. in a clockwise direction. If the suction head is aligned such that the sensor senses the mark associated with a receiving opening of the runner disk, then the system "knows" which wafer of the wafers held by the suction head is the first wafer to be removed and placed first outside the polishing machine.

The Hashimoto reference does not disclose an arm of a fixed length as disclosed in the instant invention. The Hashimoto reference further fails to disclose control means adapted to stop the movement of the runner disk such that the runner disks attain a precise predetermined position on the lower polishing disk. Finally, the Hashimoto reference fails to disclose a mark in the runner disk associated with a receiving opening of the runner disk.

The Hashimoto reference requires a plurality of sensors while in the instant invention the suction head needs only one sensor for detecting the mark on the runner disk. The

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Hashimoto reference discloses a loader and unloader mechanism in which it is necessary to first search by first sensors the center of the runner disk in a "stop" position by pivoting the loader arm and extending or retracting it. After the center of the suction head has been aligned with the center of the runner disk, additional sensors are needed to rotate the suction head to align the wafer holders of the suction head with the wafers accommodated in the runner disk.

With the amendment to claim 1 and for the reasons stated above, the instant invention overcomes the Hashimoto reference. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1 and 2 for anticipation be withdrawn.

Claims 4-10 were objected to as depending upon rejected claim 1. Claim 1 is now believed to be in condition for allowance. Dependent claims of an allowed independent claim cannot be rejected as anticipated. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to claims 4-10 be withdrawn.

Claim 11 was added to claim the allowable subject matter of original claim 3. The Office Action stated that claim 3 would be allowed if written in independent form. Claim 11 has been written in independent form and has combined the subject matter of claims 1 and 3. The 35 U.S.C. 112 indefiniteness objection to claim 3 has also been corrected in independent claim 11. No new matter has been added by this claim.

FORMALITIES

In the event that this response requires the payment of government fees and payment is not enclosed, please charge Deposit Account No. 22-0350.

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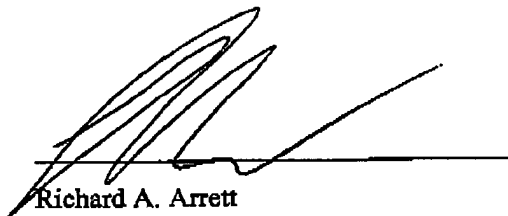
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing it is believed that the present application, with pending claims 1-11, is in condition for allowance. Early action to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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